

## One always notices death

One always notices death foraging about  
the walls and doors, forcing his damp snout  
into the likeliest sweet-smelling area-ways  
of our lives. And though some people say  
they want to do him in, I'd miss the old  
fellow; I've grown that used to his cold  
sleekness trailing me a few respectful paces  
to the rear, the way he makes such wrathful faces  
when I deliberately ignore him and pretend  
he's someone else's sub-canine friend who  
lost his bloody way in the park. But he's too  
patient to take offense; and when we meet,  
finally, he'll just take a turn about my feet  
and end up nuzzling my mouth and eyes to sleep,  
like a tired old hound with an appointment to keep.

--Lee Jacobus

## To My Friend Who Is A Negro Poet

No lyre for him, an honest drum. He'll bang  
In Connemara cloth and olive drab.  
We think it was the God who twisted Job,  
That made him black and bade him sweetly sing,  
Who now, with hands on hips -- a trooper's stance,  
Scowls fierce in wonder whence the song of dissonance.

--Stanford Sternlicht